

A Treasured Getaway Close To Home

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Like many TREASURE Forest landowners, Jerry & Gwendolyn Lacey of Fayette County have a fondness for antiques – antique cars, antique jewelry and, especially, antique furniture. When planning a getaway cabin, their decision to restore a log cabin seemed the natural choice. “We wanted to preserve some history and share it with our grandkids,” Jerry explained as he showed us around the cabin.

The search for a suitable structure ended nine miles down the road when they found just what they were looking for, a 1860-1880 dogtrot cabin. “The landowner had inherited the land,” said Jerry. “He lived in Texas and was willing to sell me the cabin. I also bought a 1928 house that belonged to his uncle.”

Because Jerry wanted the cabin moved intact they had to remove the porch floor and deteriorated back rooms. Once the cabin was set up, wood from the second log structure was used to reconstruct them.

The classic dogtrot cabin features massive 40-foot-long 10x10 hand-hewn sill logs. Sill logs were placed on stone piers to provide the cabin’s foundation. There are also three 43-foot-long hand-hewn six-inch beams in the roof of the house and wooden pegs throughout.

In the early 1900’s, it was common for homeowners to conceal log walls with lap-siding or other materials to reflect a more prosperous lifestyle. The original owner of the Lacey’s cabin once covered its interior and exterior walls with tongue and groove board, possibly for the same reasons.

One of the many challenges of restoring the house was recreating the original stonework, including the chimney, fire-

stonework. Although dry-stacking is a very time consuming method, Mr. Savage said “If its worth doing, its worth doing right.”

He also built the steps and piers for the porch using rock gathered from the old home place.

The Lacey’s have completed the exterior work and are now working on the interior. This is in addition to maintaining food plots, three fishponds, burning, clearing, planting and all the endless tasks of forest management. Jerry also works for Beville State Community College and Gwen is a director of the Fayette County Library.

Why do they devote so much time and resources to the log cabin? Shouldn’t they be relaxing and making retirement plans? “It is something we can take care of and leave behind for our grandchildren to enjoy along with the property. It is a way to preserve our history,” Jerry said. Their dream is for their cabin to be a peaceful, private getaway that’s still close to home for themselves; their two children, Jerrilyn and Jerry, their daughter-in-law, Brandi, and their granddaughter, Nadra.

The Lacey’s purchased their land in 1982 but didn’t actively management it until 1997 when

now-retired Fayette County manager George Lowrey invited them to attend the Summit of the South in Richmond, Virginia. The meeting motivated them to invite the AFC to visit the property and prepare a forest management plan. Through extensive forest management, Jerry and Gwen Lacey were awarded TREASURE Forest certification in 1999.



Stone masons (from the left) Fred Savage, Ed Dover and Eddie McDougle.

place, piers and steps. Jerry called on friends Fred Savage, Ed Dover and Eddie McDougle to recreate historically accurate stonework that met modern fire safety codes.

The three men constructed the chimney from firebrick encased in original stone for an authentic look. To recreate an original appearance, he used dry-stacking